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REGIONAL NEWS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Editorial

DEAR READERS

It is great to hear that South Africa has become a more attractive operating environment for private business – even compared to several European countries. This is desperately needed in light of the general

challenges in South Africa, particularly for small businesses who make up the majority of companies in the country. >> Read the full story.

WARM REGARDS, GISELA PIERCEY



GISELA PIERCEY,
EDITOR «SWISS REVIEW
SOUTHERN AFRICA»

South Africa:

SARS is making South Africa more like Switzerland

South Africa has become a more attractive operating environment for private business – even compared to several European countries – as recently - introduced tax changes bear fruit, says financial services firm PwC.

The company's recent EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) Private Business Attractiveness Index for 2022 showed that South Africa ranked 25th in the assessment out of 35 total territories – an improvement from 32nd in 2021.

“The country is now ranked as a more attractive operating environment for private business compared to several European countries, including Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania,” said PwC.

The group said South Africa is becoming increasingly tax-friendly for foreign business.

“This is comparable to territories like Malta (12th) and Switzerland (15th), which are traditionally viewed as tax-friendly jurisdictions,” PwC said.

PwC said that the regulatory environment in South Africa is now one of its leading attributes on a sub-category level, with the country now ranked 14th out of 33 countries.

PwC's tax controversy leader, Elle-Sarah Rossata, said that there had been noteworthy changes at SARS in recent years, which have positively impacted the interaction between the tax authority and private companies.

The graph below illustrates where South Africa sits as a destination for private business:

Country	Rank	Country	Rank	Country	Rank
Switzerland	1	Spain	12	Cyprus	23
United Kingdom	2	Belgium	13	Latvia	24
Sweden	3	Estonia	14	South Africa	25
Germany	4	Austria	15	Hungary	26
Denmark	5	Portugal	16	Slovakia	27
Netherlands	6	Lithuania	17	Croatia	28
Ireland	7	Italy	18	Bulgaria	29
Finland	8	Malta	19	Greece	30
France	9	Slovenia	20	Kenya	31
Norway	10	Czech Republic	21	Romania	32
Luxembourg	11	Poland	22	Nigeria	33

Developments that have bolstered the service include new

leadership, the restructuring of the organisation, the allocation of resources to re-capacitate the authority in the form of people and technology, as well as bolstering tax enforcement practices.

SARS has also been on a massive hiring drive to boost the number of specialists and achieve its nine strategic objectives, such as providing a more streamlined, modern and effective tax compliance authority.

The organisation has also expanded its automated assessment system to reduce the number of taxpayers required to file annual income tax returns. Furthermore, SARS has unveiled its new Vision 2024, which aims to establish a

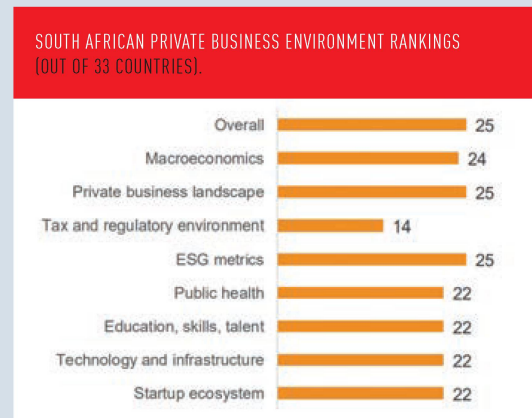
modern and trusted organisation with high integrity.

According to PwC, out of all nine metrics the EMEA Private Business Attractiveness Index analyses, South Africa's tax and regulatory environment ranks as the highest performing metric in 14th position.

PwC said that although the overall improvement is welcomed, several business environment challenges still need to be overcome, namely in the private business landscape.

South Africa is in the bottom third of surveyed countries in this metric, the firm said.

The group provided the following graph to better illustrate the tax authority's performance:



ARTICLE: BUSINESSTECH

Botswana:

Swiss president on first official visit to Botswana

The Swiss president, Alain Berset, has held talks with Botswana focusing on bilateral relations with the southern African country.

Berset was received by President Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi and signed a declaration of intent on cooperation in the health sector in February.

The two-day programme also included a visit to a renowned research institute in the capital, Gaborone, the Keystone-SDA news agency said.

Berset was also due to meet representatives from Swiss companies operating in Botswana and leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which is based in Gaborone.

Relations with regional organisations, including SADC are a priority of Switzerland's 2021-24 sub-Saharan Africa strategy, according to an official government statement.

It's the first official visit to Botswana by a Swiss president.



Berset was received with full military honours in Botswana. © Keystone / Peter Klaunzer



Berset (centre) was invited for a traditional dance during the official welcome ceremony in Botswana. Host Mokgweetsi Masisi (left) looks on. © Keystone / Peter Klaunzer

ARTICLE: SWISSINFO

Zimbabwe: Cultural Relations Between Switzerland and South Africa, 1948–1994

The VP and Minister of Health and Child Care was in Switzerland for the 5th Patient Safety Global Ministerial Summit at the invitation of Mr Berset.

Switzerland, which already has companies with interests in Zimbabwe, is one of the first world capitals that is interested in ramping up its investment portfolio in the country.

Swiss interest comes on the back of the Second Republic's policy of ease of doing business, with President Mnangagwa himself taking a leading role on that front.

"Initially, I gave him the bilateral greetings from his colleague His Excellency Dr Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, he sent me with greetings to him," Vice President Chiwenga said after the meeting. "We discussed quite a lot of the issues that affect the health sector and the assistance which the Swiss have given us. Swiss companies have even invested in the cannabis oil in Zimbabwe. We have been having meetings with some of their pharmaceutical companies here in Switzerland, Roche and Novartis AG, in which we have

signed memorandums of understanding with them so that we can get medicines and equipment from here."

Meanwhile, VP Chiwenga told the Patient Safety Summit that Zimbabwe was digitising its health management systems, formulating quality assurance frameworks and was open to strategic partnerships as it sought to guarantee patient safety in its hospitals.

To achieve its goal and augment Government financing, Zimbabwe would need strategic partnerships.

"Leveraging on the experience and know-how available in Swiss companies like SICPA on fuel marking and product tracing technology, we wish to establish strategic partnership for easy tracking of medical commodities to improve and strengthen Ministry Of Health and Child Care supply chain systems," said VP Chiwenga.

"Establishment of fully fledged electronic health records and a national health data repository using our home-grown electronic health records system called Impilo, and advocating for capacity development in Zimbabwe for production of vaccines, medicines, and other medical commodities."

ARTICLE: THE HERALD

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■ JASS EVENTS: This is held on the second Friday of each month and will commence at 2 p.m. and is held at Rolf Klein Jass Stube, 3 Bona Terra Road, Assagay (directions on our website).

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*For more up-to-date information regarding times/venues/directions, please visit our most informative website – www.swissclubnatal.org.za

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